

SPAWN

TRIUMPHS ON A DARK NIGHT

BY
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WITH
SZYMON KUDRANSKI
AND
FCO PLASCENCIA

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PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

The final pieces of Jim's connection to Project: RAGNOROK start to fall into place as Jim and Richard enact a brutal interrogation on the man known as the Agent.

An ex-analyst working under Director Kramer and Jason Wynn, the Agent was involved in selecting and vetting candidates for RAGNOROK's horrific "super soldier" experiments.

As the Agent weaves his tale, the true value of the information he possesses goes beyond his ties to The Program. He reveals that Jim, in his previous life as Director Kramer, was not responsible for the murder of the woman he loved, as he previously believed.



Jim Downing (Spawn) – A man whose past is shrouded in mystery, and connected intimately to the very fabric of the *Spawn* mythos, Jim is the world's newest Hellspawn... and so much more. Having spent years in a deep coma, Jim's main drive is piecing together the fragments of the man he was, in an effort to discover the man he truly is.



Director Kramer – Before Jim Downing woke from his coma in *Spawn* #185 he lead a completely different life – was a completely different man, with a different name, different physical appearance and quite possibly sinister motivations driven by unchecked ambition. Director Kramer ran the clandestine government program, RAGNOROK and, unknowingly had a hand in crafting some of the darker aspects of the *Spawn* universe.



The Program – A clandestine military operation with deep-rooted ties to events from throughout *Spawn*'s 20-year existence. Hidden within the secrets of The Program, also known as Project: RAGNOROK, lies the truth Jim seeks, and the dark heart of a past better left buried.



Richard Masullo (Tremor) – Transformed into the hulking monster known as Tremor by the same clandestine government program that Jim Downing once oversaw, Richard is a man on a mission, crossing the country to confront Jim about their shared past – but is he friend or foe?



The Agent – A mysterious man with unknown ties to Jim's past. "The Agent" is responsible for hiring superpowered hitmen for a variety of illegal and, more often than not, violent tasks, including two previous attacks on Jim – the Extractor's firing assault on the hospital (issues #186-188) and the rampage of Patient 46 (issue #198).

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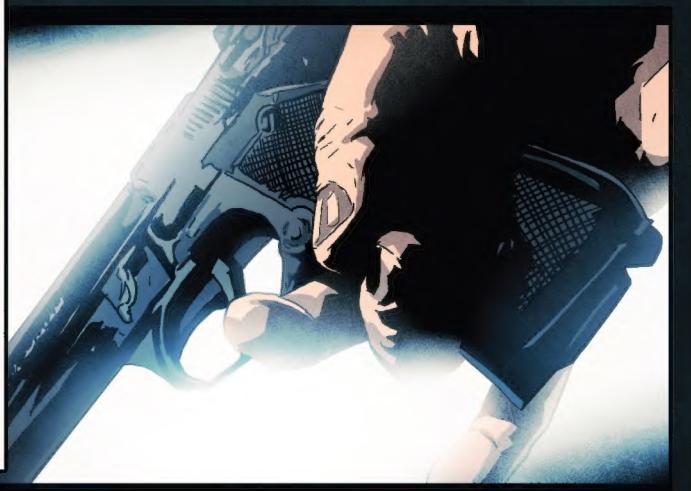


"THAT WAS THE MOMENT.
THAT'S... WHEN EVERYTHING
SEEMED TO CHANGE."

"NO ONE
TRUSTED ANYONE
AFTER THAT. AND
IT ALL BEGAN TO
UNRAVEL FROM
THERE."

GET
UP!

YOU CAN
GRIEVE
ABOUT THIS
LATER.

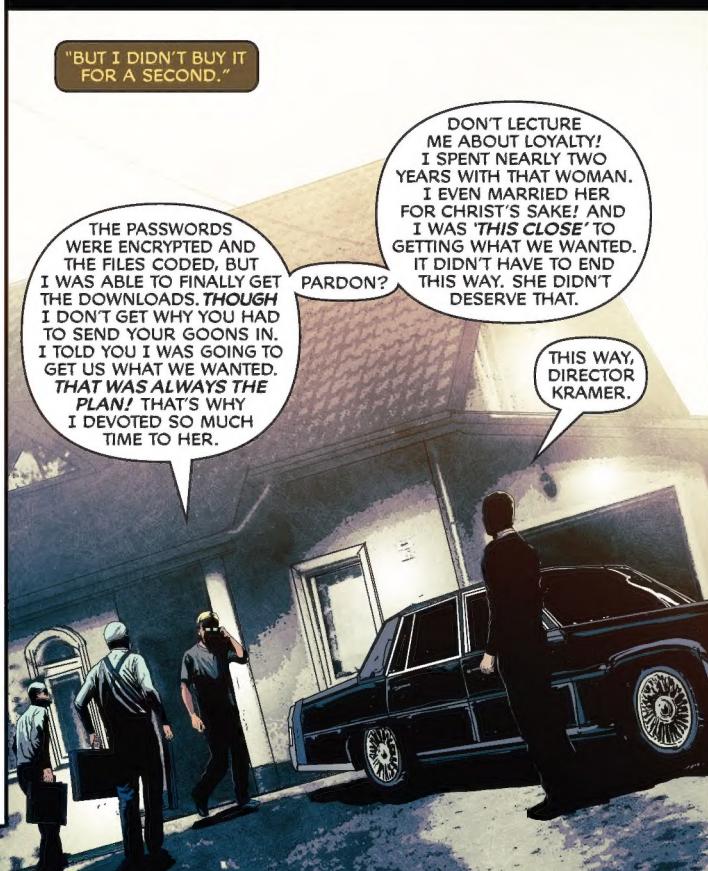
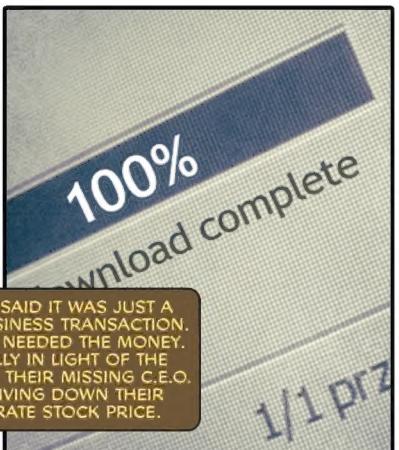


THERE WAS
ONLY ONE BULLET
IN THAT GUN AND
NOW YOUR PRINTS ARE
THE ONLY ONES ON THE
MURDER WEAPON.
THAT WON'T
LOOK SO GOOD
TO THE COPS.

SO BEFORE YOU
GET ANY GRANDIOSE IDEAS
ABOUT DOING SOMETHING
HEROIC RIGHT NOW-- LET ME TELL
YOU THAT WE KNOW WHERE YOUR
ENTIRE EXTENDED FAMILY LIVES. *ALL
OF THEM!* IF YOU THINK KILLING
YOUR BRIDE SEEMED EASY...
IMAGINE HOW QUICKLY YOUR
SISTER, MOTHER, AUNTS AND
UNCLES WILL DIE.



THAT IS,
UNLESS WE GET
WHAT WE CAME
FOR. NOW GET OVER
TO HER COMPUTER
AND DO YOUR
JOB!



I WANT THAT HOUSE SCRUBBED AND DEVOID OF ANY SIGNS I WAS EVER THERE.

UNDERSTOOD.

MAKE SURE THEY DON'T MISS A SINGLE DETAIL IN THIS CLEAN UP.

YES, DIRECTOR.

YOU HAVE MY WORD-- THESE MEN SPECIALIZE IN THESE TYPES OF 'EVENTS.'

IF YOU DON'T MIND... LET ME BE THE FIRST TO OFFER MY CONDOLENCE. I KNOW YOU WERE QUITE FOND OF REBECCA.

BUT AS YOU'RE ACUTELY AWARE, THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF 'THE PROJECT' IS TIED DIRECTLY TO MANY OF THE WORLD'S HIGH-POWERED PLAYERS, EACH WITH THEIR REPUTATIONS AT STAKE. I'M SURE YOU CAN APPRECIATE THE YEARS OF PLANNING YOU AND YOUR PARTNERS HAVE DEVOTED TO THIS CAUSE-- AND HOW STAYING THE COURSE IS BEST FOR ALL INVOLVED.

YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S GOOD TO STICK TO A PLAN.

I'LL REMEMBER THAT.

"EVERYONE STARTED COVERING THEIR OWN ASSES AFTER THAT..."



LOOK...
WE'VE BOTH
BEEN FIGHTING
OUR PAST. AND
WE BOTH WANT
ANSWERS. JUST...
JUST EASE UP
A LITTLE.

WE'RE
CLOSE, VERY
CLOSE-- TO GETTING
WHAT WE WANT. I THINK
YOU SENSE IT TOO. SO
LET'S PLAY THIS THING
OUT AND TRY KEEPING
EVERYONE ALIVE
FOR NOW.

YOU THINK
YOU CAN DO
BETTER?



DON'T
KNOW.
BUT LET ME
TRY.

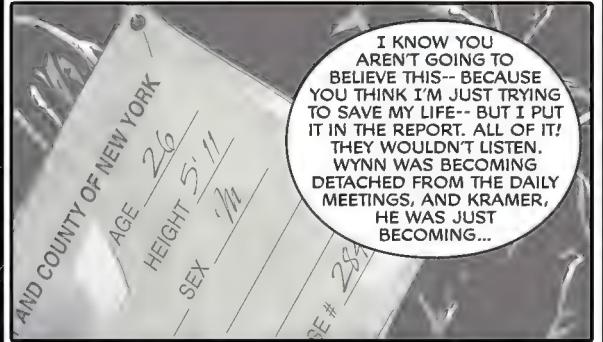
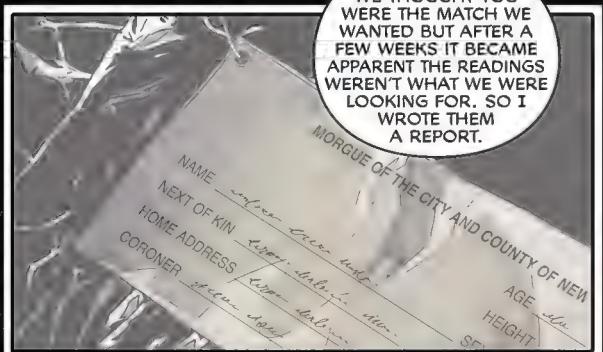








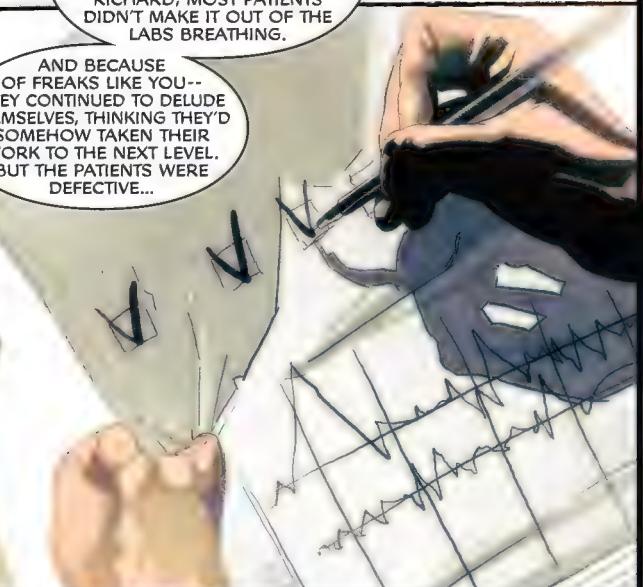
YES... AT FIRST
WE THOUGHT YOU
WERE THE MATCH WE
WANTED BUT AFTER A
FEW WEEKS IT BECAME
APPARENT THE READINGS
WEREN'T WHAT WE WERE
LOOKING FOR. SO I
WROTE THEM
A REPORT.

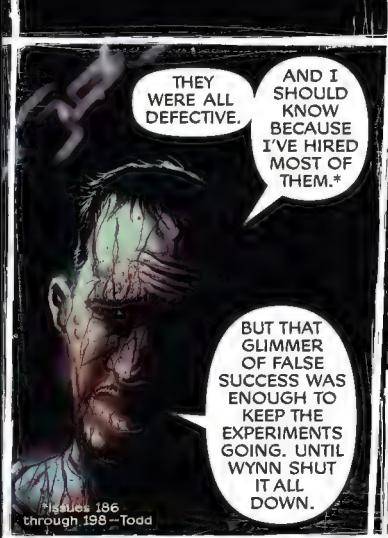


SO THEY PUSHED
ME OUT OF THE WAY
AND WENT FORWARD. I ONLY
HEARD ABOUT SOME OF THE
SHIT THAT WENT ON AFTER THAT.
CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY,
RICHARD, MOST PATIENTS
DIDN'T MAKE IT OUT OF THE
LABS BREATHING.



AND BECAUSE
OF FREAKS LIKE YOU--
THEY CONTINUED TO DELUDE
THEMSELVES, THINKING THEY'D
SOMEHOW TAKEN THEIR
WORK TO THE NEXT LEVEL.
BUT THE PATIENTS WERE
DEFECTIVE...









THEN ASK HIM WHY HE TRIED TO HIRE ME AFTER I ESCAPED.



WHY'D YOU TRY AND HIRE HIM?



I WAS TRYING TO HELP THEM!

IS THAT SO?

EXPLOITING THE 'DEFECTIVE' PATIENTS INTO A LIFE OF CRIME WAS YOUR WAY OF HELPING? IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME?

NO... THEY I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.

THERE'S ALWAYS A CHOICE! EVERY TIME WE MOVE, OR ACT, OR SPEAK--WE MAKE THOSE DECISIONS OURSELVES. SADLY, MOST OF US WANT TO BLAME OUR OWN ACTIONS ON OTHERS. THE ONLY THING OTHER PEOPLE CAN DO IS BE CATALYSTS-- AND WE ALL GET TO ACT ACCORDINGLY. SO DON'T YOU DARE LOOK AT ME AND SAY WITH A STRAIGHT FACE THAT SOMEONE ELSE FORCED YOU TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THOSE PATIENTS AGAINST YOUR WILL!

SO DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE
INNOCENT!

YOU WERE THE ONE THAT SENT THOSE VILLAINS AFTER TO ME.* YOU WERE THE ONE THAT GAVE THEM THEIR ORDERS! YOU WERE THE ONE THAT TOLD THEM TO KILL ME!

*Issue 187--Todd

*Issue 187--Todd



DON'T TELL
ME YOUR
HANDS ARE
CLEAN!



SPAWN!
YOU'RE
KILLING
HIM!



SKRITCH
SKRITCH



NOT
QUITE.



I JUST
WANT HIM
TO FEEL WHAT
IT'S LIKE WHEN
SOMEONE
WANTS YOU
DEAD.



SPAWN...



WHAT DO
YOU WANT
TO DO HERE?
I DON'T THINK
WE'RE GETTING
MUCH MORE
FROM HIM.

I DIDN'T
ASK YOUR
OPINION.



WHATEVER!

IT'S
YOUR SHOW,
BUD. YOU DO
WHAT YOU HAVE
TO DO. I'M
DONE WITH
THIS.



GOOD
LUCK,
SYKES.



IT'S
WAY TOO
LATE FOR
THAT.

RICHARD...

...I'M
SORRY.



IT LOOKS
LIKE SYKES
WILL BE OFF
THE BOARD
SOON.

JUST
LIKE YOU
WANTED.





THAT'S EXCELLENT,
RICHARD. YOU SHOULD
BE COMMENDED ON
THE WONDERFUL JOB
YOU'VE BEEN
DOING.



AND THOUGH
IT'S TAKEN US BOTH
A FEW YEARS TO FINALLY
GET TO OUR LARGER AND
MORE PERSONAL GOALS--
I'M SURE YOU WILL SEE,
IN THE END, THAT IT
WAS ALL WORTH
THE WAIT.



AS YOU MIGHT
IMAGINE, THERE WERE
A NUMBER OF MOVING
PARTS THAT NEEDED TO BE
COORDINATED IN ORDER FOR
US TO BE ABLE TO MOVE
FORWARD. BUT NOW THAT
THOSE CONCERN'S HAVE
BEEN TAKEN CARE OF IT'S
TIME TO PROCEED TO THE
NEXT PORTION OF
OUR MISSION.



WHICH
BRINGS ME
TO THE
OBVIOUS NEXT
QUESTION.



IS OUR
TARGET
READY?

I BELIEVE
SO.



ONCE HE FINISHES HIS CURRENT BUSINESS I'LL GENTLY PERSUADE HIM ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT.

NOT VERY. SYKES DID A GREAT JOB OF GIVING JUST ENOUGH INFO WITHOUT BEING TOO DETAILED.

AND SO FAR THE TARGET DOESN'T SUSPECT ANYTHING?

NOT AS FAR AS I CAN TELL.

GOOD, THOUGH IT'S A PITY I CAN'T BE THERE TO SEE SYKES TRY AND WEASEL HIS WAY OUT OF A NO WIN PROPOSITION. THE ENTERTAINMENT VALUE OF THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN PRICELESS.

I'LL GIVE YOU THE DETAILS LATER.

PLEASE DO. IN THE MEANTIME... WHEN WILL I BE SEEING THE TWO OF YOU?

EXPECT US TO HEAD YOUR WAY THE MOMENT I UTTER THE 'MAGIC WORDS'...



"... SPAWN--
I KNOW WHERE
**JASON
WYNN**
IS AT!"

NEXT ISSUE:
THE SHOWDOWN





EMPIRE